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ABSTRACT

This history of Navajo leadership and government, part of the sixth-ninth grade Navajo bilingual-bicultural social studies curriculum from the Navajo Curriculum Centers, covers types of government from the animal leaders of Navajo legend to modern times. The text is divided into five chapters: "The First Leaders," "New Neighbors--New Government," "Fort Sumner and Return," A Time of Change," and "Modern Leaders--Modern Tribal Government." The history of Navajo leadership before and after the arrival of the Spaniards, and subsequently the Anglo Americans, is given. Hostilities between Navajos and the United State government; Navajo government at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, after the "Long Walk" from Ft. Sumner; the first Navajo reservation; and the beginning of Bureau of Indian Affairs agencies, Navajo chapters, and the Navajo Tribal Council are discussed. Navajo government in the 1930's, the stock reduction problem, changes in the Tribal Council, Navajo participation in World War II, and Navajo leaders since the war are described. Eight blocks, containing from two to six questions to think about, are interspersed throughout the text. Drawings, maps, and photographs illustrate the text. (MH)

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NAVAJO LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT

A History

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SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Navajo Leadership and Government

A History

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Government helps people work together to solve problems.

CHAPTER ONE

The First Leaders

Why We Have Government

Imagine you are on a deserted island. There are many kinds of plants and animals on the island. But there are no people. You are the only person there. You must find your own food, and build your own shelter. There is no one on the island to say, "You cannot have this food, because it is *mine.* You cannot build your house here, because this is *my* land." On the deserted island, you could do whatever you wanted to do.

But suppose that one day, some other people come to the island. These people decide to stay there. They, too, need food and shelter. They start to hunt for food in the same place you do. They decide to build their house near a spring where you get water. They say they do not want you to hunt near their house, or get water at the spring.

What would you do? How might you and the newcomers settle your dispute? How might you find a way to live and work together, peacefully?

You might decide to fight for the land and water. Whoever wins the fight, wins the right to use the land and water.

Or, you might sit down and talk. You and the newcomers might make up **rules** for using the land and water. The rules would be fair to everyone. The rules would help everyone share, and work together.

To make sure that everyone follows the rules, you might choose a **leader.** The leader is a person you and your new neighbors *both*

respect. The leader would listen to you and your neighbors. After listening, the leader would help you decide what to do. The leader would help you follow the rules. Because you respect the leader, you try to follow his advice.

By making rules for everyone on the island, and by choosing a leader to help enforce the rules, you and your neighbors have created a **government.** Government is the way people try to see that everyone in a society follows the same basic rules. Usually, governments help people work together to solve common problems.

Kinds of Governments

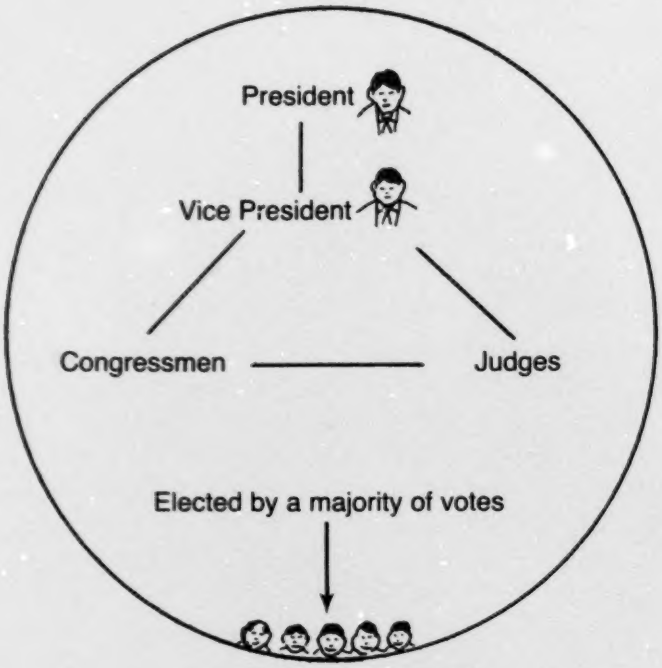
Some governments have only one leader. Sometimes, this leader is elected. The people vote for the leader they want. In other places, the leader is not elected. The people do not vote for the leader they want. Instead, the leader is born to hold a certain office. Leadership is passed down from generation to generation. It belongs to a family or clan. For example, in England, the Queen is a leader because her ancestors were kings and queens.

The United States Government has leaders who are elected by the people. The person who gets a **majority** of votes becomes a leader. The chief leader in the United States is the **President.** His assistant is the **Vice President.** There are leaders in each state, too. They work with the President and Vice President in Washington, D.C. These leaders are called **Congressmen.** They are elected by a majority of people in their state. There are also **judges** who settle disputes. These leaders all work together in the United States Government.

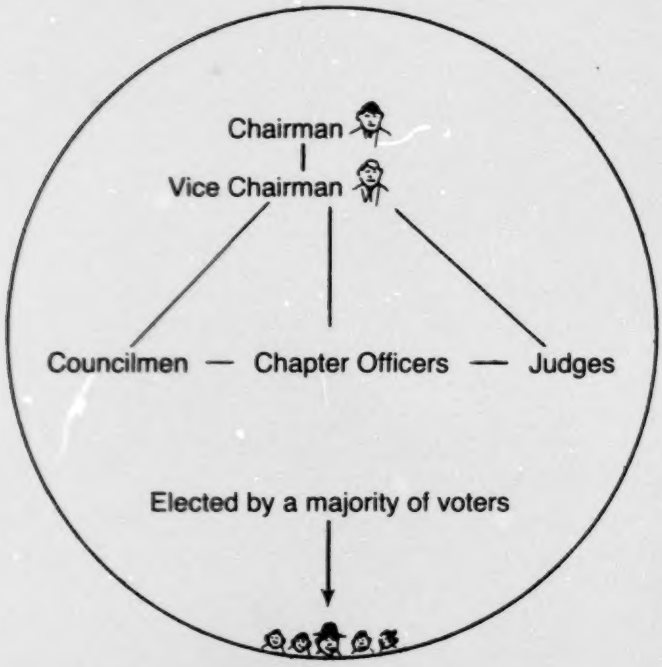
Navajo Tribal Government is something like the United States Government. There is a **Chairman** and **Vice Chairman.** They are elected by a majority of all Navajo people. Each area of the reservation has leaders, too. They work with the Chairman and Vice Chairman in Window Rock. The leaders from each area of the reservation are called **Tribal Councilmen.** They are elected by a majority of voters from their area. Every community has a **chapter,** and the community elects its chapter officers. There are also judges in each area. The judges and chapter officers work with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councilmen.

You can compare Navajo Tribal Government with the United States Government by looking at the chart on page 3. How are the two governments similar? How are they different?

This book tells the story of Navajo Government, and how it got to be the way it is today. Navajo Government has changed greatly



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT



NAVAJO TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

over the years. Once, there was no Tribal Chairman. There was no Vice Chairman. There was no Tribal Council. There were no judges or chapter officers.

Government changes because people change. When people and their way of life change, they need new kinds of leaders.

You will explore these changes in this book. As you read, you will learn about different Navajo leaders and kinds of government. Although Navajo leaders have changed, past leaders are like today's leaders in at least one way: every leader tries to help people solve problems. Problems today are different from those of the past. Our leaders have changed to meet new problems.

Our elders say it is important to learn how Navajo Government worked in the past. It is important to know how past leaders solved problems and helped people. By hearing these stories about the past, we will know better how to solve our problems today. We will have ideas about how to solve problems in the future.

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

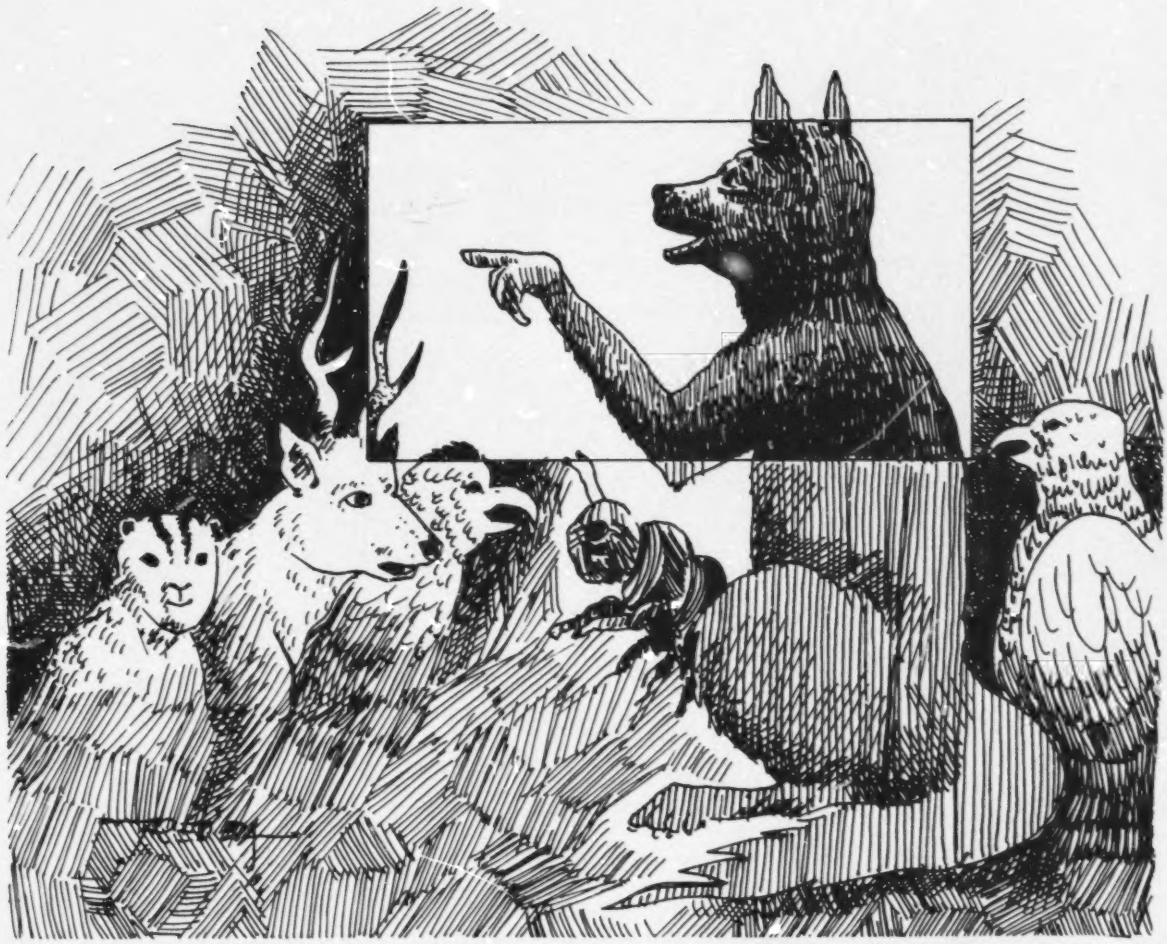
1. What is government?
2. Why do you think people need government?
3. How are leaders chosen?
4. Who are the leaders of the United States Government?
5. Who are the leaders of the Navajo Tribal Government?
6. Why is it important to learn about past leaders and past forms of government?

Leaders of the Lower World

Before the Emergence, there were four Chiefs who led the people. The four Chiefs, it is said, were chosen by Old Man. He thought the beings of the Lower World needed leaders. Old Man made Great Wolf the head Chief. Old Man then chose Mountain Lion, Otter and Beaver as Chiefs.

Four other Chiefs also led the people from each of the four directions. These leaders were Water Monster, Blue Heron, Frog and White Mountain Thunder.

It was the Chiefs' job to organize the world and make it good for all living things. The Chiefs told the people how to build hogans and sweathouses. They taught people how to farm and hunt.



The first chiefs were animal leaders.

It is said that the four Chiefs had a **ranking.** Some were higher Chiefs than others. The first in rank was called, "He Usually Rises With Orders." He was also called Chief-In-the-Morning. He told people when to go hunting. Before they left, the hunters went to see the Chief in his hogan. The Chief gave the hunters tobacco to smoke. Later, they left to hunt.

The second-ranking Chief was called, "He Arrives With Orders." The third was called, "He Usually Walks Along With Orders." The fourth was called, "He Walks With Orders." These three Chiefs taught people how to raise their crops—corn, wheat, melons, pumpkins, beans and chile.

A missionary named Berard Haile wrote down stories told by Navajos. In one story, this was said about the first four Chiefs:

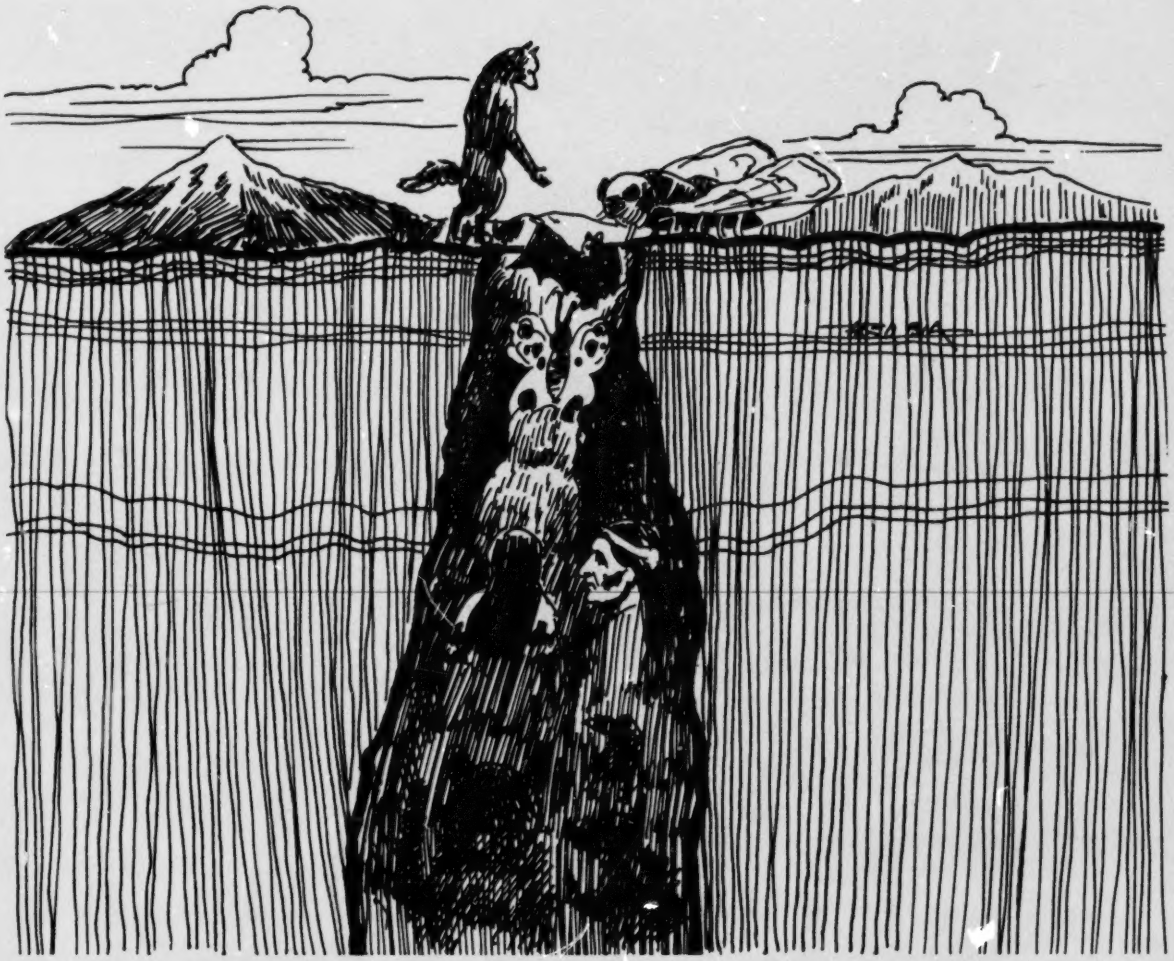
> . . . The first Chief gave his talk at the first sign of dawn. "Arise! Build the fires! Many things need to be done and there are many journeys to be made," he would say.
>
> The second in rank would also walk out. "Prepare the food," he would say.
>
> The Chief called, "He Walks Along With Orders" would also walk out. He walked among the men about the time when it warms up in the morning. "You men go out now on the hunt," he would say. And so all the men went out to hunt.
>
> The last Chief went closely among the people. "You women must cook on the stones and make broth when the hunters return," he would say.

Chiefs talked to their people every morning. They made speeches about how to live the right way. The Chiefs told the people how to work, and told them to start work early. The people listened to the Chiefs, and lived under their direction.

After the Emergence

When the beings came to the fourth world, the Chiefs held a council. They talked about how humans should be created. The Chiefs prayed for Wind to dry up the mud that was left from a Great Flood. They asked the Holy People to build new mountains for Navajoland.

For awhile, the Navajos went around under the direction of the



The animal leaders led the people into the fourth world.

Chiefs. But soon, the people became unhappy with their animal leaders. One, Great Snake, began biting people and killing them. Bear tore people with his great claws. Because of this, the people stopped listening to the Chiefs.

Coyote was unhappy with the Chiefs. Other people joined Coyote, against the Chiefs. Finally, the animal leaders found they could not enforce the laws.

To this day, if a leader does something wrong or hurts people, he can be removed from office.

After this, there were four human Chiefs. Each leader came from one of the four original clans.

Since this early time, humans have been the only Chiefs or leaders. These leaders were called **naat'áanii.**

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

1. Who were the first Chiefs of the Navajo people?
2. What were the jobs of the first Chiefs?
3. Why did humans eventually become Chiefs?

Leaders In Dinétah

The place where the Navajos emerged is called **Hajinei.** Some people say this place is in the La Plata Mountains.

No one knows exactly how these first people lived. They were probably good hunters. They lived in forked stick hogans, and moved around a lot.

After some years, the people settled in a place called **Dinétah.** Dinétah means, "Among the People." It is thought of as the Navajos' homeland.

Dinétah is located in what is now northwestern New Mexico. It is a place with many canyons, hills and buttes. The land is covered with pinyon and juniper trees. In Dinétah, the people got most of their food from wild plants and animals.

There were other people living in Dinétah, too. These were the Pueblos—the ancestors of modern Hopis and Zunis. The Pueblos built houses of stone in the canyons. They were farmers who grew corn, beans and squash.

The Navajos and Pueblos lived and worked together in Dinétah. They cooperated in farming and building homes. The Navajos lived in forked stick hogans, but they also built houses of stone, like the

Dinétah.

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Pueblos. The picture on page 11 shows one Navajo dwelling. These stone dwellings are called **pueblitos.** Sometimes the Navajos surrounded their houses with high walls and watchtowers.

We know very little about Navajo Government in Dinétah. But the remains of Navajo dwellings tell us something about how the people lived, their leaders and their government. Look again at the picture on page 11. Why do you think the people built tall houses of stone? Would it be easy to enter a house like this? Would this kind of house be hard for an enemy to attack? Why do you think the people built watchtowers?

The Dinétah Navajos and Pueblos were often attacked by the Utes who lived to the north. To protect themselves, the Navajos and Pueblos became **allies.** Allies are people who say they will help each other. The Navajos and Pueblos built houses made of stone because these houses were hard for enemies, like the Utes, to attack. The only way to get into the houses was by a ladder. When the last person climbed to safety, the ladder was pulled away.

The picture on page 12 shows another Navajo dwelling, called **Shaft House.** The only way to enter it is by a tall, spiral ladder. From the top of Shaft House, the Navajos could see the enemy coming. They could climb to the top, and surprise enemies before they reached the Navajos and Pueblos.

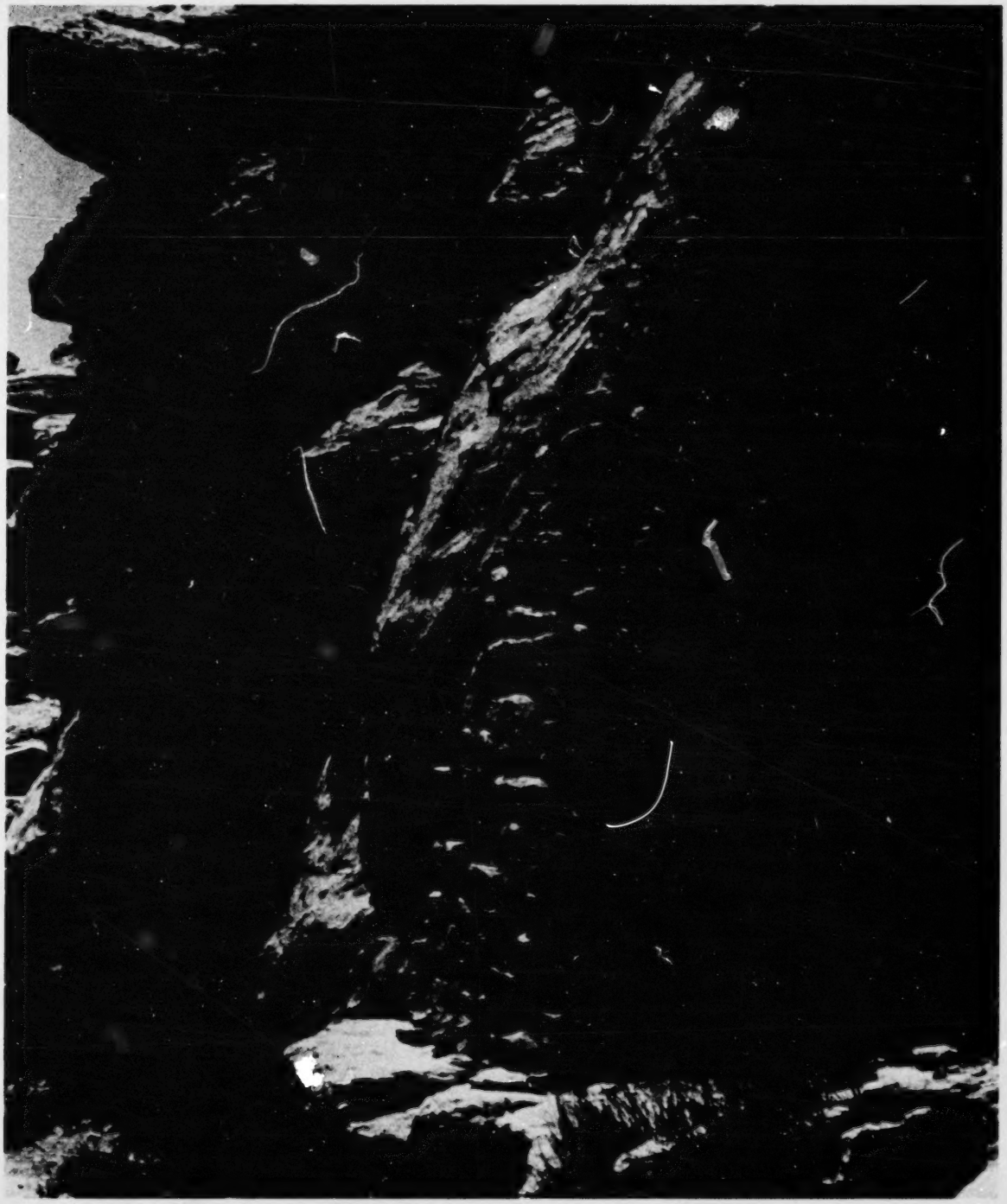
What do the things you have learned so far tell you about government in Dinétah? You know how the people made their living—by hunting wild game, gathering plants, and by growing some crops. You know they had enemies, but they also had allies —the Pueblos. The Navajos and Pueblos worked together and cooperated to plant crops and protect themselves from enemies.

From this, we can make some guesses about Navajo leadership and government. To build the large pueblitos and towers, the people needed leaders. The leaders might have been like the four Chiefs in the Lower World, who called people in the morning and told them to work. In Dinétah, leaders organized men to build the pueblitos. Perhaps the leaders divided the people into groups. Each group might have worked on a different part of the building. After the towers and pueblitos were built, the leaders might tell certain men to watch at the towers for enemies. When enemies came, the leaders probably talked to the people and decided how they would fight.

The leaders were probably good hunters. They led the hunt. They knew how to farm, and they taught people about this.

These leaders probably worked with the Pueblo leaders. Because they were allies, Navajo and Pueblo leaders decided

A *pueblito* in Dinétah.



Shaft House.

12

Leaders in Dinétah taught people how to hunt, plant crops, and build the big stone houses.

how to help their people work together.

Can you make any other guesses about Navajo leaders and government in Dinétah? How were they like the leaders in the Lower World? How were they different? How were they like the leaders we have today?

The Spaniards tried to make other people live by Spain's government. If people did not obey the Spaniards, they sometimes burned the peoples' homes and fields.

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CHAPTER TWO

New Neighbors--New Government

Coming of the Spaniards

The people lived in Dinétah for many years. Then, in about 1600 or 1700, they met another group of people, the Spaniards. These strangers came from across the ocean, in Spain. Their government was very different from the Navajos'.

The Spaniards were ruled by a Queen. The Queen gave ships to men to sail across the ocean. These men, called explorers, were looking for gold and riches. When they discovered new lands, they claimed the land for the Queen of Spain.

At first, the Spaniards moved into what is now Mexico. They tried to force the Indians in Mexico to live by the rules of the Spanish Government. The Spaniards built churches in Indian villages and tried to make the Indians worship the Spanish god. They wanted the Indians to become Christians.

Then the Spaniards began to move north. They heard stories about "Seven Cities of Cíbola." These were supposed to be cities of gold. The Spaniards thought the seven cities were at the Hopi villages, so they headed that way. You can see the path of the Spanish explorers on the map on page 16.

The Spaniards did not find the gold they were looking for in Hopiland. So they turned east. Perhaps, they thought, the Seven Cities of Cíbola were at Zuni. So the Spaniards went that way.

As they had done in Mexico, the Spaniards tried to make the Hopis and Zunis live by the rules of the Spanish Government. They built more churches, or **missions,** in Indian villages. If the Indian people did not obey the Spaniards, they whipped and beat people.

The Spaniards came from the south, in Mexico. They were looking for "Seven Cities of Cíbola," which they thought were made of gold.

At one Pueblo village, Acoma, some Spanish soldiers cut off the feet of 500 Acomas. The Spaniards killed other people, and burned the village. This was in 1598.

Navajos traded with the Hopis, Zunis and other Pueblos. When Navajos came to the Pueblo villages to exchange goods, they heard stories about the Spanish strangers. The strangers, it was said, came from the south. They tried to force people to live by the Spanish Government and church. If people did not obey, the Spaniards killed them or destroyed their homes and farms.

After hearing these stories, most Navajos stayed away from the Spaniards. But the Spaniards had sheep, goats, cattle and horses. They traded these with Pueblos. Eventually, they traded with Navajos, and the people came in closer contact with the strangers.

The Spaniards had livestock. Eventually, they traded the livestock with Navajos.

Navajos Expand Their Land

The Navajos' herds grew larger, and they began to spread out in search of better grazing land. They left Dinétah and moved west, to the grassy hills and valleys of what is now northern Arizona and New Mexico. Many people settled around Canyon de Chelly. Some people moved to the top of Black Mesa and the Chuska Mountains. Other people moved south, to Cebolleta. By 1800, Navajo country covered all the land shown on the map on page 19.

Within this country, the people moved around a lot. They built hogans near a spring or pond. When the water and grazing grass went down, they moved and built another hogan.

Some people had farms. They planted their crops where the soil was rich and there was water.

No one owned the land. People just used the land they needed. If someone was grazing their sheep in a certain area, other people did not try to use that land. But if the land was not being used, a person knew it was all right to graze sheep and farm there.

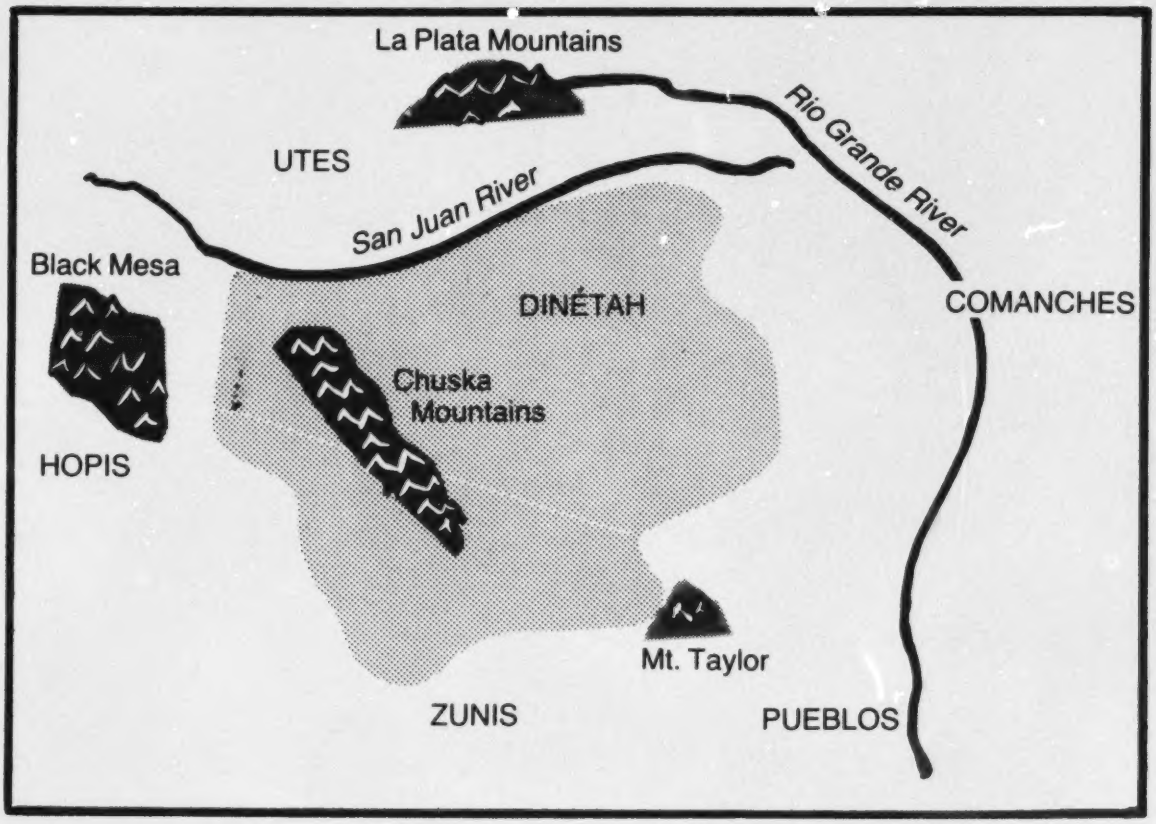
The people had no main leader. Instead, there were many naat'áanii or **headmen.** They were leaders of certain families who lived in certain areas. If people in one area had a problem, they came to the naat'áanii for advice.

The naat'áanii had many sheep, cattle and horses. Some naat'áanii were medicine men, and had powerful songs. They were good speakers, and often spoke at ceremonies. They were good hunters and knew how to farm. They could talk to the people and teach them many things. The naat'áanii were well respected by the people in their area.

Sometimes, the naat'áanii led **raids** to get more sheep, horses and cattle. Two or three leaders joined together, and got the men from their area to go with them. The men went on horseback to the Pueblo and Spanish villages. They stole livestock and brought these back to Navajo country.

The villagers also raided Navajo camps. They stole livestock. Sometimes the villagers took women and children **captives.** The captives were taken to the villages, and became slaves. Navajos started taking slaves, too. This is how the Zuni and Mexican clans began.

The Spaniards wanted to stop the Navajo raids. But the Spaniards did not understand the Navajo leaders or Navajo Government. The Spaniards thought Navajo Government was like Spain's government, which had one main leader. Because of this,



Navajo Country in 1800.

The *naat'áanii* were good speakers. They spoke at ceremonies. The people respected them.

the Spaniards believed the Navajos had one main "chief" who could speak for all Navajos.

The Spaniards chose one naat'áanii and gave him the title of "General." The General signed a peace treaty that said the Navajos would not raid the Spanish villages. One of the first headmen to be called General was Don Carlos. He signed peace treaties with the Spaniards. The treaties said all Navajos would stop raiding.

But other Navajos did not think of Don Carlos as their only leader, or "Chief." They did not think one person should speak for all Navajos. Some Navajos did not agree with the treaties. They saw that the Spaniards and Pueblos were still taking Navajo livestock, women and children. So, many Navajos continued to raid the Spaniards and Pueblos, hoping to get back the livestock and captives that had been stolen from them.

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

1. What was wrong with the Spaniards' beliefs about Navajo Tribal Government?
2. Why did they think Navajo Government was like Spain's government?

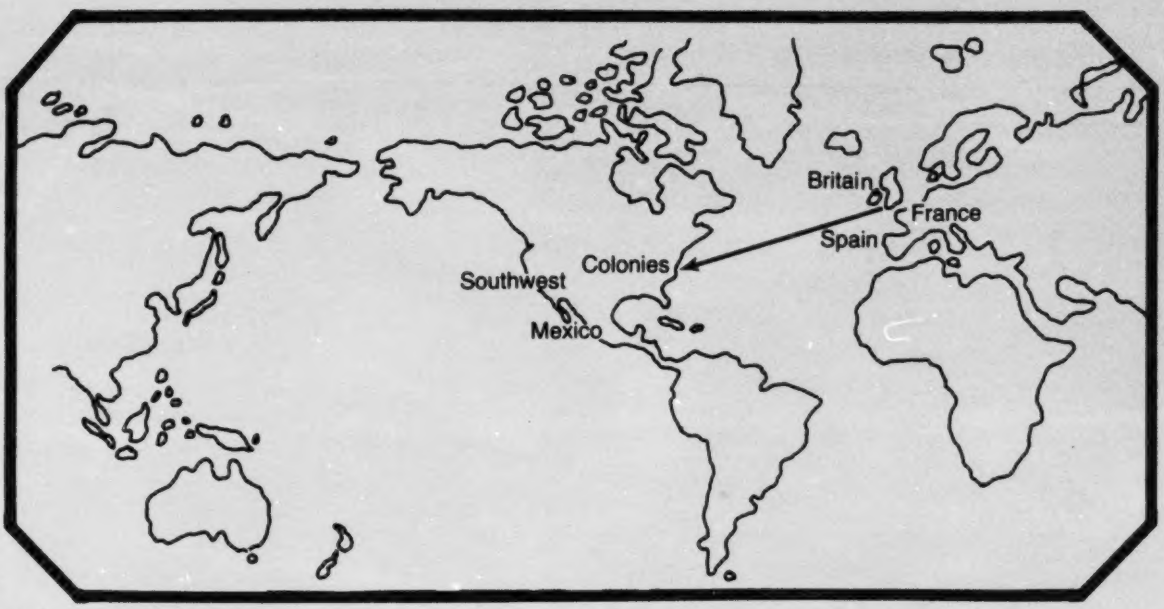
Anglo-Americans

At this time, another group of people was moving into Navajo country. These people were the Anglo-Americans. They too came from across the ocean. Most came from Great Britain and France. Can you find these places on the map on page 22?

At first, the newcomers settled along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. There, they formed thirteen **colonies.** The colonies were ruled by the British Government.

But soon, a dispute arose between the British and the colonists. Because of this, the colonists created their own government. In 1776, the colonists elected a President, Vice President and Congressmen. The colonies became an **independent nation.** The nation was named the United States of America.

The Americans began moving west. Like the Spaniards, the Americans wanted to increase their land. Like the Spaniards, the Americans thought all people on this land should be governed by *their* government. The Spaniards and Americans did not think the land belonged to the Indian people who lived there.



The colonists came from across the ocean. They fought with the Mexicans for the land in the Southwest.

In 1821, the Spaniards in Mexico also became an independent nation. At that time, Mexico's boundaries stretched into what is now Arizona and New Mexico. This was called the **Southwest Territory.**

Americans and Mexicans both wanted the Southwest Territory. The two countries began to quarrel about the land. Each country sent soldiers to fight for the land. In 1846, the United States won. Mexico and the United States signed a peace treaty. The treaty said that Mexico would give up most of the land in the Southwest to the United States.

On the treaty, it said the Southwest, including Navajo country, "belonged" to the United States Government. But the raids between Navajos, Pueblos and Mexicans made it unsafe for Americans to settle in this land. So the United States sent more soldiers into the Southwest. The soldiers were told to make peace between the Navajos, Pueblos and Mexicans. The soldiers were told to stop the Navajo raids, and make the land safe for American settlers.

The soldiers made the same mistake the Spaniards made. The American soldiers believed Navajo Government was just like the United States Government. They thought one Navajo leader could speak for all the people. The soldiers tried to get Navajo leaders to sign peace treaties. The peace treaties said that *all* Navajos would stop raiding.

Some Navajo leaders refused to sign the treaties. When this happened, the soldiers used force. Once they attacked 500 Navajos and forced them to come to a treaty meeting. Fourteen naat'áanii came to this meeting. One of them, Zarcillos Largos, tried to explain the Navajos' position. Zarcillos Largos said that the war between Navajos, Mexicans and Pueblos was an old one. He said the Navajos had good reason to raid the villagers. He told the soldiers that the villagers had taken many Navajo prisoners, and made them slaves. This was a main cause for the dispute, he said. Then he told the soldiers that they were doing the same thing. Zarcillos Largos said:

> This is our war. We have more right to complain about you for interfering with our war, than you have to fight with us for continuing a war that started long before you got here. If you will act justly, you will allow us to settle our own differences.

The soldiers did not listen. They made the naat'áanii sign a peace treaty that promised the Navajos would stop raiding. If the

The raids between Navajos, Pueblos and Mexicans got worse.

naat'áanii did not sign, the soldiers threatened to kill them.

The headmen signed the treaty, and the people were allowed to leave the meeting. But many people did not agree with the treaty. They knew that Mexicans and Pueblos were still raiding Navajo camps. So Navajos continued to raid the villagers. The fight between Navajos, Mexicans and Pueblos got worse. It is said that during this time, hundreds of Navajo children became slaves in Mexican homes.

Some naat'áanii became known as war chiefs. The war chiefs were the leaders of families and clans from certain areas. The chiefs had many sheep and cattle. They knew special songs to help in warfare. They led the raids against the villagers.

Other naat'áanii became known as peace chiefs. They tried to stop the raiding. They wanted to make peace with the Americans and the villagers.

The war chiefs and peace chiefs were elected by the people. Both men and women could become chiefs. They became chiefs because they knew certain ceremonies and were good speakers. When the people were going to choose a chief, they gathered together. They asked the person to make a speech. Sometimes it took a long time for the people to decide which person to elect. The speeches and the meeting sometimes took two or three days. But when they voted, the people usually all voted for the same person. Their decision was **unanimous.**

Even though the peace chiefs were powerful, they could not stop the raids. The American soldiers decided to use more force against the Navajos to get them to stop raiding. The soldiers built a fort in the middle of Navajo country. This was Fort Defiance. The soldiers shot and killed Navajo livestock that grazed near the fort. They killed over 70 animals.

After this, the peace chiefs, war chiefs and other leaders got together. They decided to hold a big meeting, or **council.** Each leader went to the people who lived in his area. He told the people to come to the council meeting.

It is said that 1,000 people came to the meeting. It was held near Chinle. Zarcillos Largos was there. He was the main medicine man for the meeting. Twelve war chiefs and 12 peace chiefs were there.

The people met for four days. Zarcillos Largos talked for peace. But another leader, Manuelito, said: "We will make war and drive these Americans from Navajo country."

It was decided to attack Fort Defiance. Early one April morning in 1860, about 1,000 men surrounded the fort. The soldiers in the

The peace chiefs and war chiefs told the people to come to a council. At the council meeting, they decided to drive the soldiers out of Navajo country.

The battle at Fort Defiance lasted all day. The soldiers had guns. They killed some Navajos and drove the others away.

fort did not see the Navajos coming. The Navajos attacked the fort. They ran through the corrals, and began shooting at the soldiers.

The fight lasted all day. The Navajos had some guns, but their main weapons were bows and arrows. The soldiers had many guns, and they had a cannon. They fired the cannon and killed several Navajos. By the next morning, the other Navajos decided to leave.

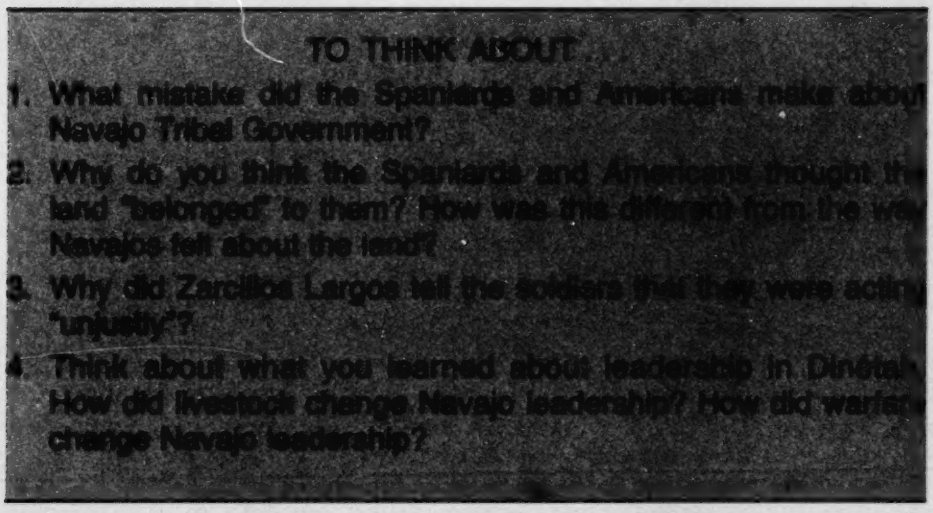
After this, the United States Government ordered the Navajos to surrender at Fort Defiance. People who did not surrender were considered enemies of the United States. Men would be killed, and women and children would be taken captive.

Some Navajos did not believe the soldiers would kill them if they did not surrender. Others thought they would be killed even if they did surrender. So most people did not give themselves up at this time.

In 1863, the United States sent a troop of soldiers into the middle of Navajo country. The soldiers were led by Kit Carson. Carson and his men marched through Navajo country. They burned peoples' homes and fields. They killed thousands of sheep and goats, and left them in piles to rot.

The people were in a terrible situation. Winter was coming. Their fields and homes were destroyed. Their livestock had been killed or taken away. The people had no food or shelter. So many people gave up. They walked to Fort Defiance and surrendered to the soldiers there.

For awhile, some naat'áanii, like Manuelito, held out. They hid around Black Mesa and the Chuska Mountains. Finally, Manuelito was wounded in a fight, and even he gave up and went to Fort Defiance.


TO THINK ABOUT . . .
1. What mistake did the Spaniards and Americans make about Navajo Tribal Government?
2. Why do you think the Spaniards and Americans thought the land "belonged" to them? How was this different from the way Navajos felt about the land?
3. Why did Zarcillos Largos tell the soldiers that they were acting "unjustly"?
4. Think about what you learned about leadership in Dinétah. How did livestock change Navajo leadership? How did warfare change Navajo leadership?

After Manuelito was wounded, he surrendered at Fort Defiance.

During the Long Walk, the people who were too sick to go on were killed by soldiers.

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CHAPTER THREE

Fort Sumner and Return

Navajo Government at Fort Sumner

In 1863 and 1864, 8,000 Navajos surrendered at Fort Defiance. From there, they were forced to walk over 300 miles to Fort Sumner, New Mexico. Fort Sumner, called *Hwéél dí,* was to be the Navajos' new reservation.

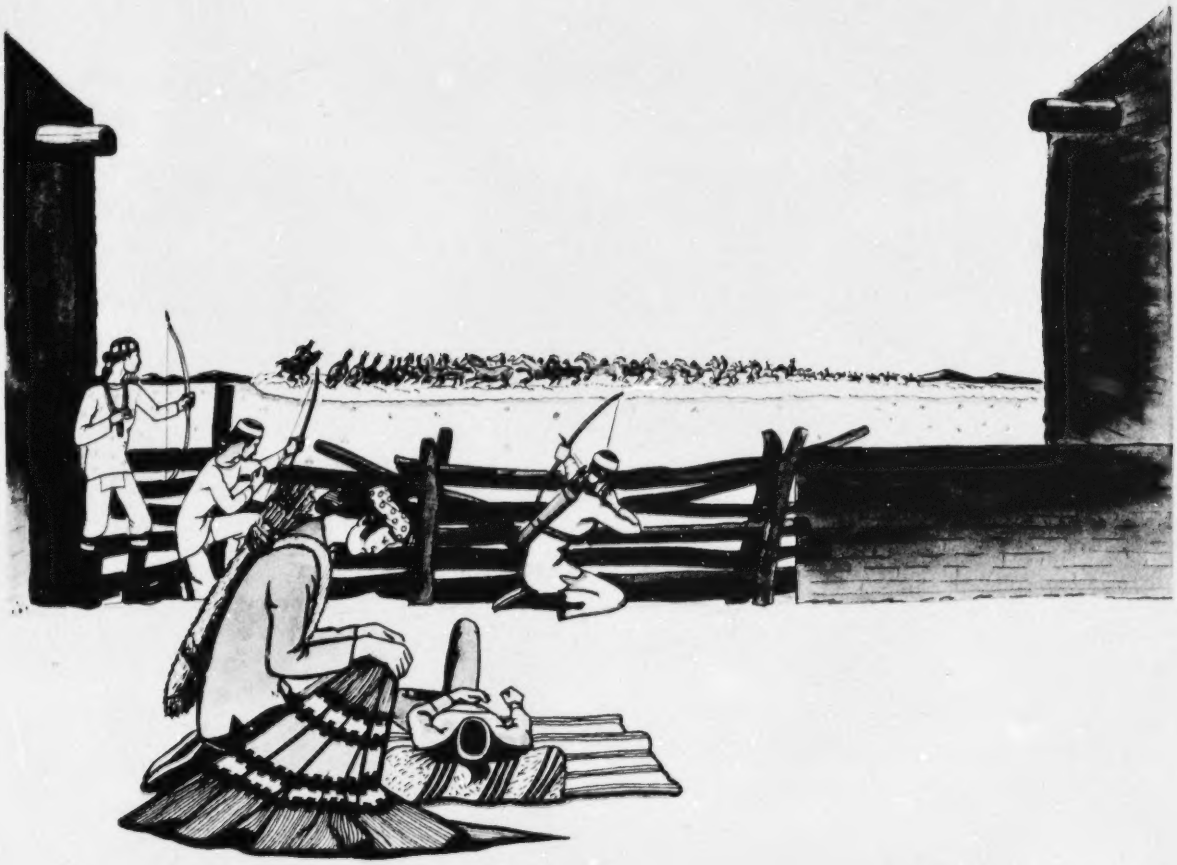
It was a long, hard trip to Fort Sumner. It was winter, and the trails were piled with snow. Many people died of frostbite. Others became sick from diseases they caught from soldiers. The soldiers did not let sick people stop to rest. It is said that some people who were too sick or old to go on, were shot to death.

Because of these hardships, our elders call the trip to Fort Sumner the "Long Walk."

At Fort Sumner, the soldiers tried to create a new form of Navajo Government. The people were divided into 12 villages. The villages were about one-half mile apart. Each village had a "chief." The chief was supposed to report to the head soldier at the fort. There was one main chief. This was Barboncito.

Each village had a **court.** This was like the courts the Americans had. The 12 village leaders made up a "Supreme Court," called a "Chief's Council." The Council was supposed to make the people obey the laws of the United States Government. The soldiers thought this would make Navajo Government like the United States Government, and Navajos would learn to live like Anglo-Americans.

There were many problems at Fort Sumner. The soldiers wanted the Navajos to become farmers. But little rain fell, and no crops would grow. There was not enough grass for the few sheep



HOKE
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Many people were sick at Fort Sumner, and Navajos were attacked by Comanches. The Comanches felt the Navajos were stealing Comanche land.

and goats the people had brought with them. There was not enough food to eat, and people were hungry. They became sick. One year, 2,000 people died of smallpox.

There was not enough wood at Fort Sumner for fires and shelter. When men went out to get wood, they were attacked by Comanches. The Comanches thought the Navajos were on *their* land. The people complained, and asked to go back to Navajo country. But the soldiers and other leaders in the United States Government did not listen.

Finally, in 1868, Barboncito was allowed to go to Washington,

The Navajo leaders signed a peace treaty with the United States. Then the people were allowed to leave Fort Sumner.

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D.C., to talk to the United States leaders there. He told the Washington leaders about Fort Sumner. He told them the people were hungry, and that many people had died. He told them there was not enough food. He told them about the Comanches.

Some Washington leaders came to Fort Sumner to see for themselves. They saw that Barboncito was right. They spoke to other Navajo leaders at Fort Sumner. The leaders told them the people wanted to return to Navajo country. The Washington leaders decided to let the people leave Fort Sumner.

Before the Navajos could leave, they had to sign a peace treaty with the United States. The treaty said the Navajos would receive part of their old land. This would be their new reservation. The land was about one-fifth the size of their old territory. But the people were glad to have even this.

You can see how big the first reservation was by looking at the map on page 35.

The treaty also said the Navajos must stop raiding. The United States Government promised to free the Navajo slaves in New Mexico. Also, the United States promised to give the Navajos sheep, tools and seeds for planting. The United States promised to build schools on the new reservation. Fort Defiance would be changed from an army fort to a place where government officials would work for the reservation. It would no longer be a fort.

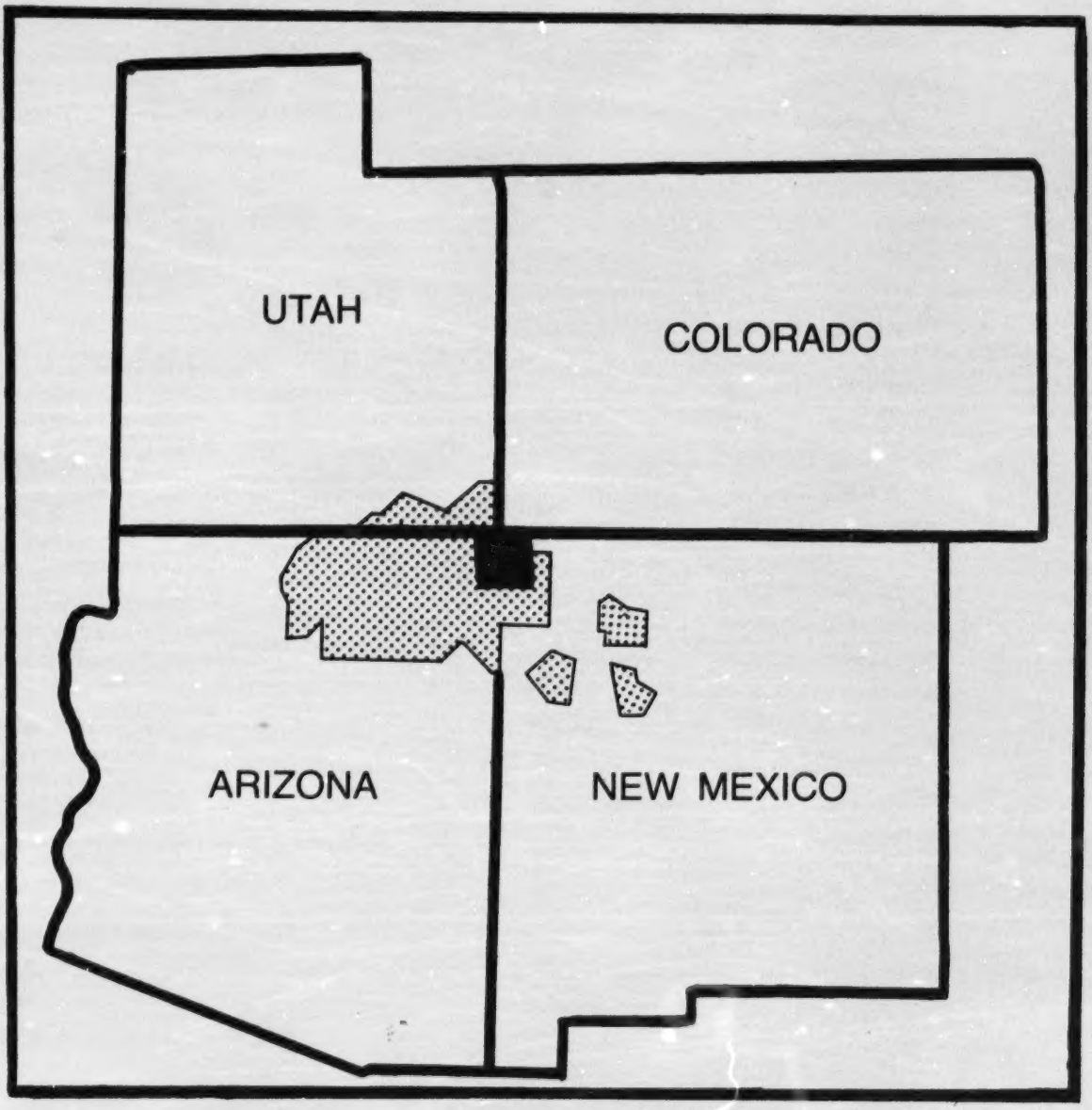
After hearing all this, Barboncito told the soldiers:

> The good news you have told us is right. We like it very much. We have been waiting for a long time to hear the good words you have told us, about going back home. After we go back to our own country, it will be the same as it used to be. I will not stop talking until I have told all the people the good news.

Then, 29 Navajo leaders signed the peace treaty with the United States.

TO THINK ABOUT

1. What was Navajo Government like at Fort Sumner?
2. Do you think the leaders at Fort Sumner had real authority? Whose orders were they supposed to carry out?



The first reservation, shown in black, was much smaller than the reservation today.

First Years On the Reservation

The Navajos left Fort Sumner and headed for home. It is said that when some people saw Mt. Taylor, they fell to their knees and cried tears of happiness.

The government gave each family two sheep. With this, the people began to rebuild their lives. Their homes and fields had been destroyed by Kit Carson and the soldiers. The people had to build new homes and plant new crops.

The first years after Fort Sumner were hard ones. There was not enough rain, and crops did not grow. The herds were small. Many people went hungry. To get more livestock, some men started raiding again.

During this time Barboncito was known as the "Head Chief." He was made Head Chief by officials at Fort Defiance. Barboncito worked with the officials, and talked to the Navajo people. He told the people what the officials wanted them to do.

Barboncito died in 1870. After this, Manuelito became Head Chief. Other leaders during this time were Delgadito and Narbona. The job of these leaders was to work with officials at Fort Defiance. The leaders then told people what the officials said, and what they wanted people to do.

These leaders were respected by the people, but their main job was working with the Anglo officials. Because of this, people still depended on the naat'áanii in their area. If the people had a problem, they went to the naat'áanii in their area for help.

Start of the Agencies

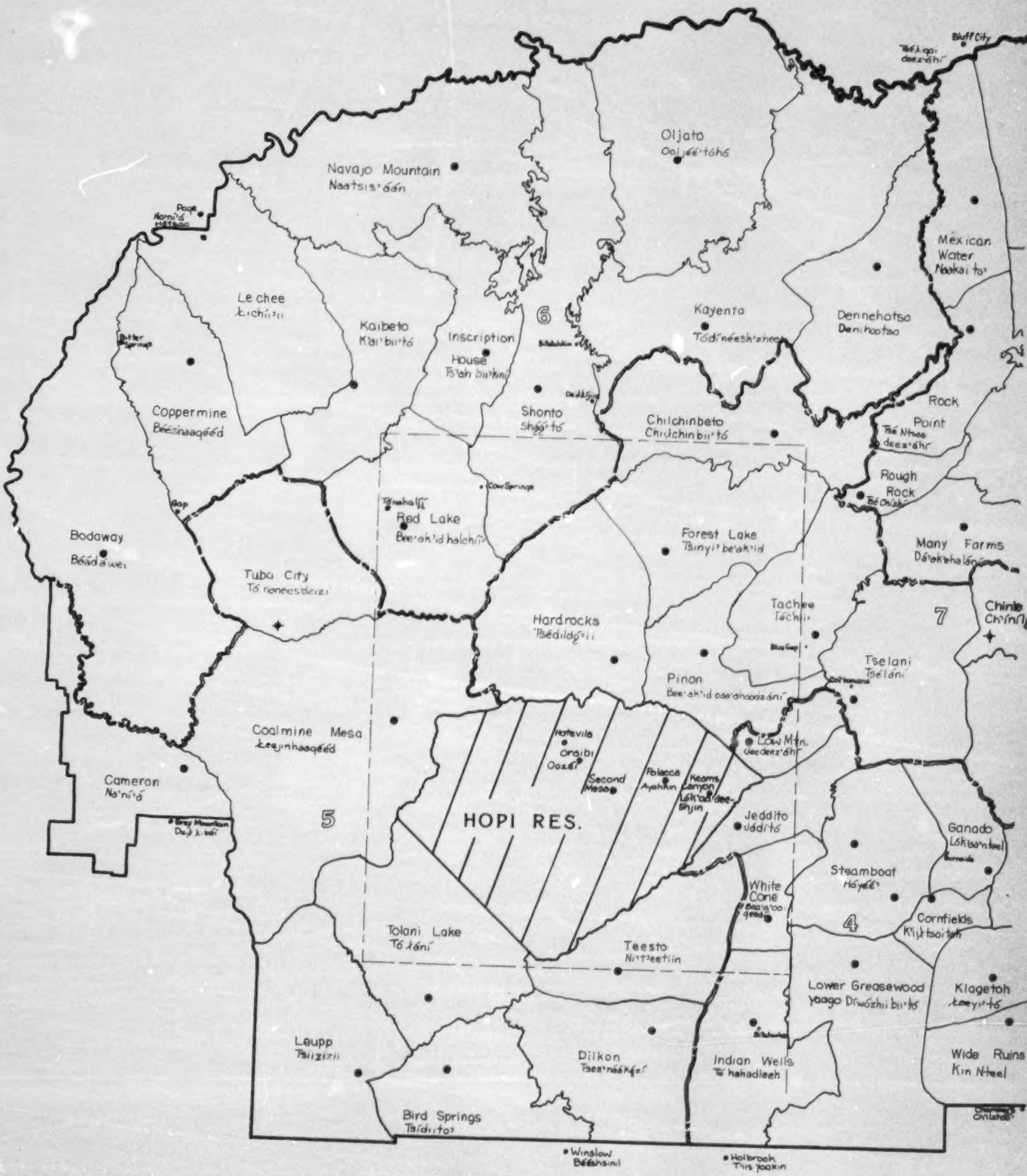
When Navajos signed the treaty in 1868, they agreed to be governed by the United States. The Navajo Tribe was not considered an independent nation. It was called a **sovereign but dependent nation.**

The United States had a special office to help govern Navajos and other Indian people. This was the **Bureau of Indian Affairs.** We usually call this the "BIA."

One of the BIA's main jobs was education. BIA boarding schools were built on reservations all over the country. The BIA also built schools in cities off the reservations. On the Navajo Reservation, a boarding school was built at Fort Defiance. Later, schools were built at Keams Canyon, Tuba City, Shiprock, Crownpoint and Leupp.

The schools became the BIA's headquarters in these areas. The areas became known as **agencies.** Can you find the agencies on the map on pages 38–39?

The "Head Chiefs" worked at the Agency. They told the people what the agency officials wanted people to do.



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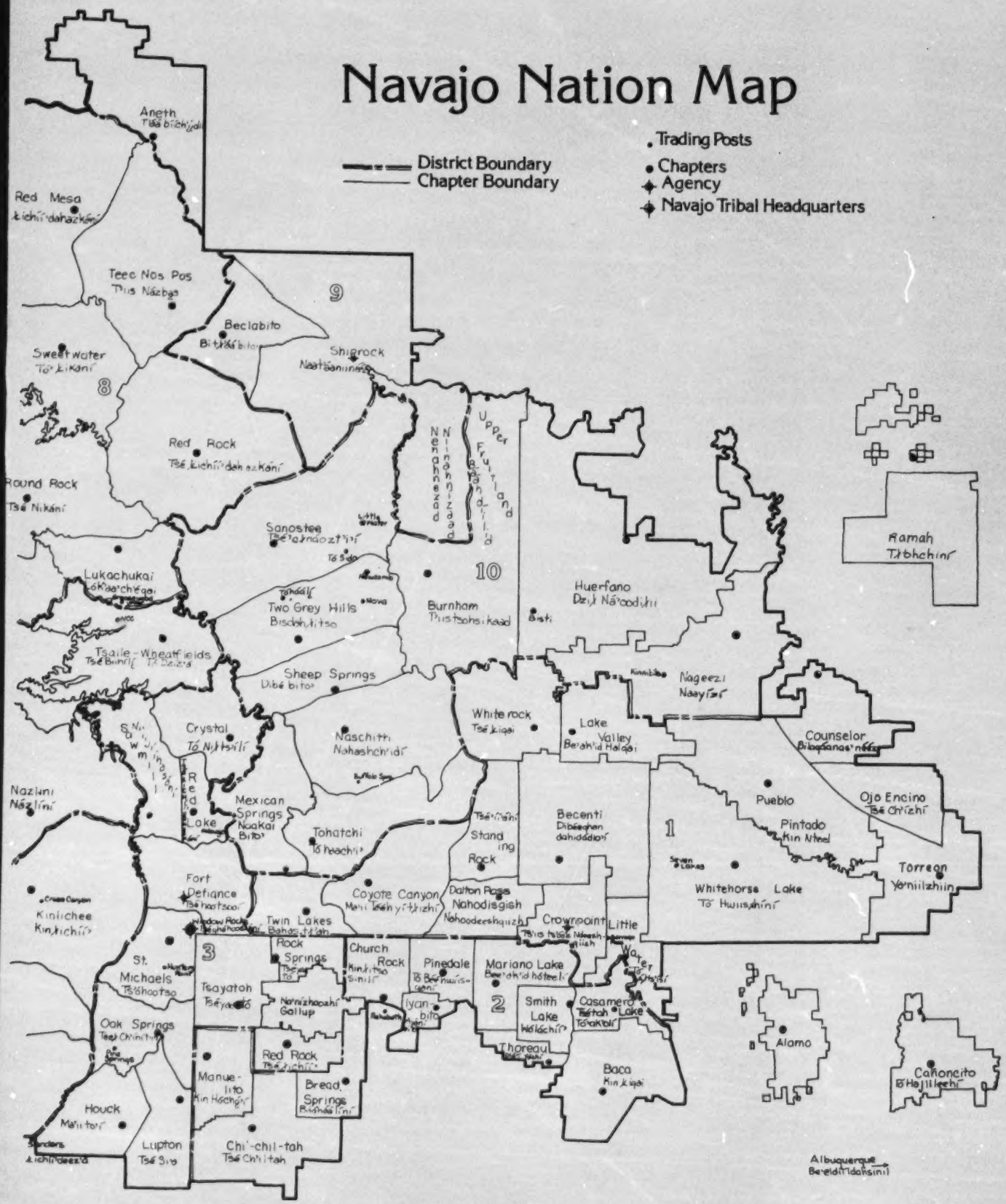

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Every agency had a head BIA official, the **agent.** Later, he was called the agency **superintendent.** His job was to watch over his area, or agency. The superintendent helped run the schools. He carried out orders from Washington, D.C. He helped govern the Navajo people in his area.

Chapters

Most agency superintendents did not speak Navajo. It was hard for them to tell people what the BIA was doing, and what was happening at the agency.

One superintendent was John Hunter. He was an Anglo, and he worked at Leupp. He had many ideas and plans for the people at Leupp. He knew the BIA had money to build dams and roads. But Hunter did not know how to tell the Navajos in his agency about this. He did not know how to get all the people from Leupp to decide about these things.

Hunter knew about a kind of government in the east, called the **town hall.** In small towns and communities, people elected community leaders. The leaders met with community members every week or every month. At meetings, they talked about what was needed in the community. They talked about problems and how to solve them. If there was money for the community, the people decided how to spend it. They voted to do certain things to make their community better.

Hunter thought this would be a good way for Navajos to decide about things in their community. But instead of a town hall, Hunter called his idea the **chapter.** Hunter asked the naat'áanii near Leupp to call the first meeting. Hundreds of people came to this meeting. They decided the chapter was a good idea. They elected a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. These were the first chapter leaders.

The chapter leaders' job was like the headmen's. Usually people who had been headmen were elected as chapter officers. They worked with the BIA and with people in their area. BIA officials told the chapter leaders about money for roads, dams and other things. The chapter leaders told people about this at meetings. If the people decided to spend the money on a road, chapter leaders got people together to build it.

A Tribal Council

About the time that chapters were getting started, another kind of government was started at Shiprock. There, some oil companies

John Hunter met with the *naat'áanii* at Leupp. He asked them to get the people together for the first chapter meeting.

The first chapter meetings were held outside.

discovered oil. The oil companies wanted to **lease** the land near Shiprock to drill for oil.

The 1868 treaty said that Navajo land could not be leased unless three-fourths of the people living there agreed to this. So BIA officials called a meeting of the people living near Shiprock. This meeting was called a **General Council.** At first the General Council refused to lease the land. At a later meeting, they agreed.

Some people say this was the beginning of the Navajo Tribal Council. But the General Council was different from the tribal government we have today. The General Council met only when an oil or gas company wanted to lease land. The only reason for the General Council was to decide about leases. And the General Council could not speak for *all* Navajos. The Council represented only a certain part of the reservation.

BIA officials wanted to form a council that would represent *all* Navajos. So in 1922, a **Business Council** was created. The leaders of the Business Council were Chee Dodge, Charlie Mitchell and Dugal Chee Bikiss. They were picked by the BIA. Their main job was to approve oil leases. They met for this reason only.

The Business Council held one meeting. After this, the BIA made rules to start a Navajo **Tribal Council.** We do not know if any Navajo leaders knew about the tribal council, or if Navajos helped make up the rules. Chee Dodge might have known about it, but most Navajos did not.

Even though Navajos did not help start the council, it was supposed to represent *all* Navajo people. There was a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and one **delegate** from each agency. There was also an **alternate** from each agency. The council leaders were elected by the Navajo people.

The First Tribal Chairman

Chee Dodge was the first Chairman. He had been taken to Fort Sumner as a boy. There, he learned English from the soldiers. The soldiers asked him to interpret for them. When he came back from Fort Sumner, his family sent him to school. At school, his English got better and he learned more about the Anglo way of life. Later, Chee Dodge became the Chief Interpreter for the Fort Defiance Agency.

Chee Dodge's experience helped him understand both the Navajo and Anglo way of doing things. This was very important. It helped Chee Dodge in his job as leader for many years to come.

Chee Dodge was the interpreter for the Fort Defiance Agency. This helped him understand the Navajo *and* the Anglo way.

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

1. What kind of government did the Navajos have at Fort Sumner? Whose idea was this?
2. How did United States officials change Navajo Government after Fort Sumner?
3. Who started the chapters? How were they like the old government with the naat'áanii? How were the chapters different from the old way?
4. Why was the General Council started? Did the General Council and the Business Council represent the Navajo people? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think it was important for Chee Dodge to understand both the Navajo and the Anglo way?

The people's herds were growing. Soon there was not enough grass and water for all the people and their livestock.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Time of Change

Navajo Government In the 1930s

Navajos had a tribal council, but it did not have much power. The council could meet only when a BIA official called a meeting. Rules for the council said a BIA official had to be at all the meetings. The record of meetings was kept by the official.

Because of this, most Navajos did not know much about the tribal council or what the council leaders were doing. The people did not attend council meetings. They heard what happened at meetings from their delegates. But for most people, the council was not very important.

During this time people depended more on the chapter leaders. These were the leaders who worked closely with people in their area. The naat'áanii and the medicine men were still important leaders, too. People came to them for advice, and they helped people solve problems.

Then something happened to change Navajo Government.

Stock Reduction

After they left Fort Sumner, the people started building up their herds. Over the years, the herds grew. The people needed more grazing land for livestock. So the United States made the Navajo Reservation larger. The reservation was increased 19 times. You can see how the reservation grew by looking again at the map on page 35.

Finally, there was no more land to add to the reservation. Anglos had settled around the reservation. They had farms there. Cities had been built around the reservation. Railroad tracks had been put

there. The Navajos had to use the land they had for their livestock and crops.

There were more and more livestock, and more and more people using the land. The land began to run down. There was not enough grass for livestock. There was not enough water for people, animals and crops.

BIA officials began to worry about this. They sent men around to count all the livestock on the reservation. When they finished counting, the BIA officials met with the tribal council. The officials said each Navajo family must give up half their livestock. This was the only way the land could be saved, the officials said. This was the only way there would be enough grazing grass in the future.

Then BIA officials met with chapter leaders. The officials told the chapter leaders to decide how many livestock the people in their areas had to give up. If people did not do this, the BIA would send police to take the livestock.

People did not want to lose their livestock. This was the way they made their living. Some people had only a few sheep or goats. If they gave up half of them, how would they live?

So, many people became angry at the chapter leaders. They blamed the chapter leaders for making them give up their livestock. Some people stopped coming to chapter meetings. Sometimes there were not enough people at meetings to vote. After awhile, the chapters were not as important in Navajo Government.

A New Tribal Council

The tribal council was against stock reduction. But the council had little power to change things. Because of the rules that were made by the BIA, the council was controlled by BIA officials.

Then, in 1936, the council made an important decision. They said that the only reason the council was started was to approve oil and gas leases. The council rules did not let them decide about other problems, like stock reduction. The council could not really help the Navajo people. A new council was needed, they said. The new council should have more power. It should be able to deal with problems and needs of *all* Navajos, not just the oil and gas companies.

The council chose a group of people to make up new rules. This group was called a **Constitutional Assembly.** The Assembly's job was to make rules for a new tribal council. There were 70 Navajo leaders on the Assembly. They came from all over the reservation. Chee Dodge was one of the leaders.

The leaders decided on the new rules. They wrote the rules down, in a **Constitution.** The Constitution told how Navajo Government should run.

The leaders sent their Constitution to Washington, D.C. But the Washington officials did not agree with the new rules. They voted against the Navajo Constitution. Then, BIA officials wrote other rules for the tribal council.

Because Washington voted against the Constitution, Navajos have never had a Constitution. The rules that were made by Washington officials are the rules the council follows today.

The rules say there are 74 members on the council. The members are elected by the people in their area. There is a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

The first Chairman of the new council was J. C. Morgan. Howard Gorman was the first Vice Chairman.

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

1. Why wasn't the first tribal council very powerful? What did the council leaders do about this? What happened?
2. Why did the chapters lose their importance?

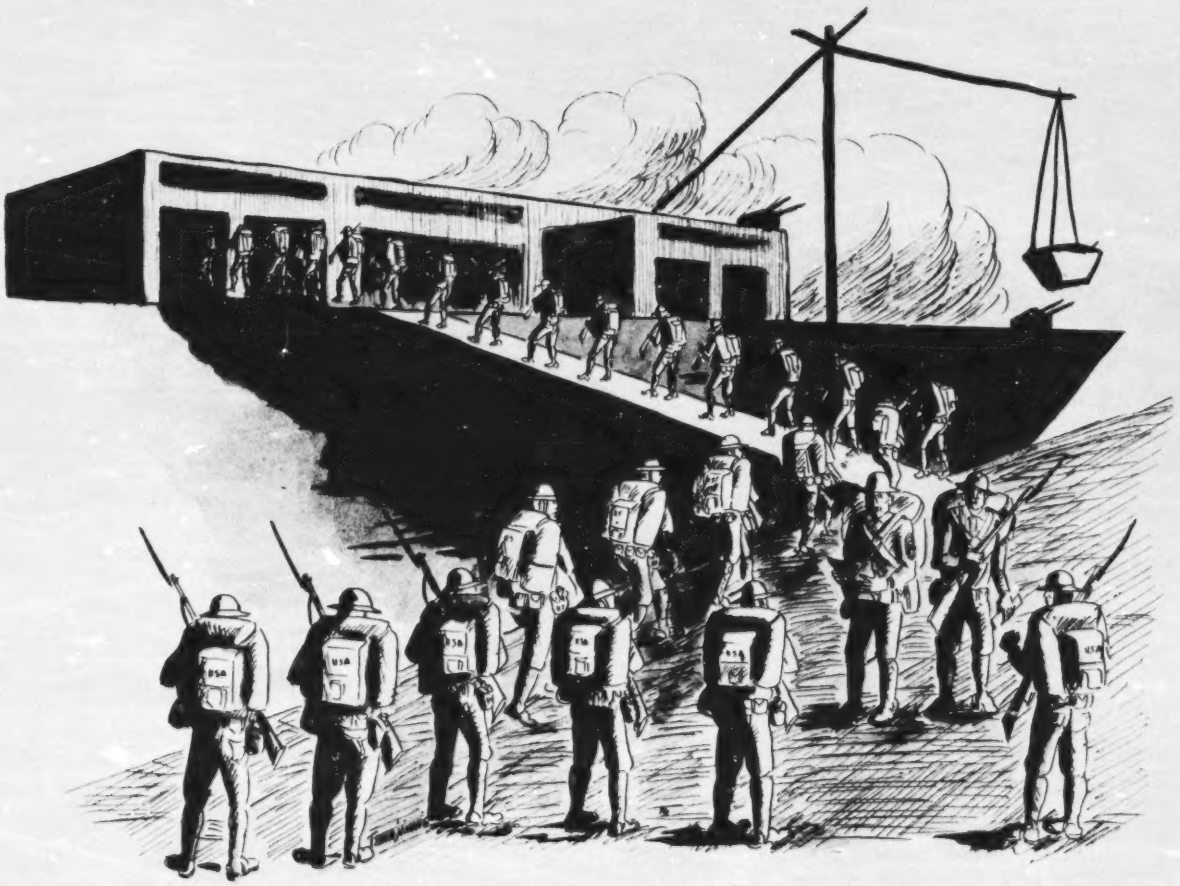
A World War

In 1941, the United States went to war against Japan and Germany. This was World War II. It was called that because countries from all over the world fought in the war.

Many Navajos fought in this war. They joined the United States Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force. They were sent all over the world to fight. Some Navajos became **code talkers.** They used the Navajo language to send secret messages to the United States and Great Britain.

With so many people fighting in the war, there were many new jobs off the reservation. People left to take these jobs. They worked at Army depots in Flagstaff. Some people worked on farms. Others took jobs wherever they could find them. This was the first time some people had lived off the reservation.

The war ended in 1945. Navajo servicemen came home. The people who had taken jobs off the reservation lost their jobs. They were replaced by people who returned from the war. The jobs that



Many Navajos joined the service to fight in World War II.

had to do with the war, like at the army depot, were no longer needed.

When they came back, people found there were no jobs on the reservation. But they could not make a living with livestock, either. Stock reduction left people without a way to make a living. Many people did not know any other way to make a living. They had been raised to herd sheep and farm. This was the way of life they knew.

The Navajos faced a new problem. Their old way of making a living, with livestock, was not working like it did in the past. But most Navajos did not know other ways to make a living. This was true especially for older people who had never lived off the reservation.

The people who came back from the war thought that schools, and education, were the only way Navajos could learn to survive. These people had learned new things from the people they met during the war. They thought all Navajos needed to learn more about life off the reservation. More schools were needed to teach these things, the people said.

The 1868 treaty promised a school for every 30 children. But in 1946, only one out of every 100 Navajos had been to school.

Some people went to the tribal council. They told the council leaders what they learned when they left to fight or take jobs off the reservation. They said that other Navajos needed to learn about these things. They asked the tribal council to find money for more schools.

A Stronger Tribal Government

At this time, Chee Dodge was Chairman again. The Vice Chairman was Sam Ahkeah. Chee Dodge and Sam Ahkeah agreed that new schools were needed. They agreed that people needed to know new ways to make a living.

Sam Ahkeah was like Chee Dodge in some ways. Sam Ahkeah came from Chinle and Shiprock. When he was a boy, he went to boarding school in Colorado. There, he learned English. He learned more about the Anglo way of life.

Sam Ahkeah thought it was important to know *both* the Navajo and the Anglo way of life. He thought people needed more schools so they could learn these things. He also thought the tribal council could do more to help the people. He thought the tribal council could do this if it had more power and authority. Sam Ahkeah thought the council and the Navajo people—not Washington—should run the Navajo Government.

In 1947, Chee Dodge died. Sam Ahkeah became Chairman.

Sam Ahkeah

After this, Sam Ahkeah tried to make the changes he thought people needed. He tried to get money for schools. He tried to get money to make the tribal council stronger.

In 1950, the United States Government answered Sam Ahkeah's requests. The government passed a law called the **Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act.** The Act gave money to the Navajos and Hopis.

The Navajos received over $88,000,000. The money was to build new schools and make old school buildings better. Some money was for clinics and doctors. Some was for building roads across the reservation. There was money for new chapter houses. Soon, the chapters became important again.

Things began to change on the reservation. There were new jobs at schools, clinics and other places. The tribe had more control over oil and gas leases. The tribe started getting more money from oil, gas and mining on the reservation. Some of this money was used to start a **tribal scholarship fund.** The scholarships helped Navajo students go to college. More people were able to go to school on and off the reservation.

Because of this, Navajo Tribal Government became stronger. It was able to help the people better. It was able to solve problems better than it had in the past.

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

1. **How did World War II change people's minds about what Navajos needed? How did this change Navajo Government?**
2. **What things made Sam Ahkeah a good leader during the 1940s and 1950s?**
3. **How did the Navajo-Hopi Act make Navajo Government stronger?**

After 1950, the tribe was able to give *scholarships* to Navajo students so they could attend college.

Raymond Nakai became Chairman in 1963.

CHAPTER FIVE

Modern Leaders—Modern Tribal Government

Since the 1950s, Navajo Government has grown stronger. The tribe has found new ways to earn money, such as from mining and timber industries. The tribal government uses this money to find more and better ways to help people in all parts of the reservation. Some money is used to build roads or make old roads better. Some money is used for education. Some money is used for electricity and telephone services.

Because of this, the reservation has changed greatly in the past 30 years. The people have changed their way of life. When people change, leaders must change, too. If leaders do not change, they cannot help people solve new problems.

In this chapter, you will learn about three recent Navajo leaders. Each leader had different problems to face. You can compare these leaders and decide how each one worked for the Navajo people. You can ask yourself what they did to help people. If you were Tribal Chairman at the time, what would you have done? Would you have done things differently?

Raymond Nakai

Raymond Nakai was born in Lukachukai in 1921. He did not start school until he was eight, and then he went to Lukachukai day school. Later, he went to school at Fort Wingate and Shiprock.

When World War II started, Nakai joined the Navy. He learned how to use radios in the Navy. When he came back home, he started a radio program in Flagstaff. Many people on the reservation heard Nakai's program. When he ran for Tribal Chairman in 1962,

The people heard about Nakai from his radio program in Flagstaff.

the people already knew about him from the radio program.

In the past, when people voted for a Chairman, they did not always worry about what the leader thought about *one* certain thing. Instead, they voted for the person they felt was the best *overall* leader. What the leader thought about one certain thing was not as important.

This changed when Nakai ran for Chairman. In that election, people wanted to know what Nakai thought about certain things. These things were called **issues.**

One issue when Nakai ran was peyote and the Native American Church. Nakai thought people should be able to use peyote and attend Native American Church meetings if they wanted to. He said this was **freedom of religion.** He said this was a right that all Amerians have.

The person who ran against Nakai was Paul Jones. He disagreed with Nakai about peyote.

Nakai won the election. He became Tribal Chairman in 1963.

Many important things happened when Nakai was Chairman. A law was passed in Washington called the **Economic Opportunity Act.** This law helped the Navajo Tribal Council set up the **Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity.** Usually we call this **ONEO.** ONEO gave money to communities all over the reseration. Some money was to train people in new jobs. This is where the **Neighborhood Youth Corps** comes from. Some money was for education. This was how **Navajo Community College** was started. Some money was for grading roads and building community centers. If you go out into your community today, you can probably find many things that were started with money from ONEO.

Three years after he was elected, Nakai ran for Chairman again. He ran against Samuel Billison and Sam Jones. Nakai won again. Some people think he won because of one important issue: the use of peyote by the Native American Church.

This was Nakai's **second term** in office. One of the things that happened during his second term was **resource development.** Power plants were built near the reservation. Some people did not agree with this. Other people approved, because the power plants brought millions of dollars to the tribal government.

Peter MacDonald

Nakai ran for a third term in 1970, against Peter MacDonald. MacDonald was from Teec Nos Pos. When he was 13, he left and

Chairman MacDonald at a Navajo Culture Day at Rough Rock School.

went to Dolores, Colorado. There, he worked at a saw mill. Later, he went to Oregon and worked on the railroad.

MacDonald joined the Marines when he was 15. He became a code talker. This helped him learn English. When he came back home, his family helped him go to school in Oklahoma.

MacDonald was the head of ONEO when Nakai was Chairman. Because of his job at ONEO, many people knew about MacDonald. They liked what he was doing at ONEO, and thought he would make a good Chairman. So, in 1970, MacDonald was elected Chairman.

MacDonald promised the people more jobs. He wanted to increase the tribe's money from industries and resources. MacDonald wanted Navajos to run their own businesses. This is how the **Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA)** and **Navajo Housing Authority** were started.

Also, during MacDonald's first term, some communities took over their own schools. Today, there are community-controlled schools at Rough Rock, Rock Point, Crownpoint, and Ramah. Can you find these places on the map on pages 38–39?

While MacDonald was Chairman, the tribal council was expanded. MacDonald formed **committees.** Each committee tries to deal with certain problems. For example, there is an education committee that deals with schools and education needs.

MacDonald was in office for three terms. While he was Chairman, the tribe became more active in using and developing its resources, like coal and uranium. MacDonald worked with other tribes on this. He and other tribes started a group called **CERT.** This stood for the **Council of Energy Resource Tribes.** This group spoke out to the United States Government and others about energy resources on Indian reservations.

MacDonald also tried to help reservation communities grow. He identified five **growth centers.** These were Chinle, Window Rock, Crownpoint, Tuba City and Shiprock. MacDonald got money to help these areas grow and to provide more jobs. Because of this, a Fed Mart store and other businesses were started at Window Rock. A shopping center was built at Chinle and Tuba City.

These were important changes that MacDonald made. Many people agreed with what he did. But other people pointed to areas where they felt MacDonald failed. There were still thousands of Navajos without jobs. Some people thought MacDonald wasn't using tribal money in the best way to help people. Some people thought his government had become *too* large, and that he had

Peterson Zah, giving his *inauguration speech* in 1983.

stopped listening to people. Other people didn't like what he did in the Navajo-Hopi land dispute. These people said MacDonald spent a lot of money for Anglo lawyers, but the lawyers had not been able to solve the dispute.

Peterson Zah

In the 1982 election, MacDonald ran against Peterson Zah. Zah was from Low Mountain. He grew up in a traditional home. He went to college at Arizona State University. Zah had worked with ONEO programs at Low Mountain. He had been the head of the Navajo Legal Services, DNA.

Many Navajos thought it was time for a change. Zah promised to change Navajo Government. He said the people would have more control over government. He thought the Chairman should not have too much power. Instead, Zah said, the people and the chapters should become more involved in government. Zah called this **self-government.**

Zah said he would try to solve the land dispute with the Hopis. He said the lawyers had not been able to do this, even though they were given a lot of tribal money. Zah promised that he and the Hopi Chairman would sit down under a tree. After a big feast, they would talk things out. This was better, Zah said, than fighting each other in the Anglo courts.

Changing Times and Changing Leaders

Think about all the leaders you have read about in this book. What were the first leaders like? What kinds of problems did they try to solve?

What were leaders like in Dinétah? Why do you think they were like this?

How did the Spaniards and Americans change the people's way of life? What kind of leaders did people need then?

Why was the tribal council started? How has it changed over the years? How have tribal leaders changed?

The Navajo people have had many kinds of leaders. Each leader had a different situation and different problems to face. When situations and problems change, leaders must change, too. This is the only way they can help their people.

Navajo Government today is much different from government in the past. But today's leaders, and today's people, can learn much from the leaders of the past. Without these past leaders, Navajo Tribal Government would not be what it is today.